

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Apparatus for defining a scan area within a scanable surface of a scanning device of the type which has a control interface that can initiate and control a scan operation responsive to a scan signal being received, said apparatus comprising:

a first set of slidable members located on a first axis adjacent the scanable surface for defining coordinates of the scan area along said first axis thereof and generating signals indicative of said coordinates;

a second set of slidable members located on a second axis generally perpendicular to said first axis, said second axis being adjacent the scanable surface, said second set of slidable members defining coordinates of the scan area along said second axis thereof and generating signals indicative of said coordinates; and,

a link for communicating said coordinate indicating signals to said control interface.

2. Apparatus as defined in claim 1 further comprising a generally L-shaped housing to which said first and second sets of slidable members are attached, said apparatus being an external attachment to a standard scanner and located adjacent the scanner surface thereof, said link extending from said housing to the control interface of the scanner.

3. Apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first set of slidable members comprise two members that are located and retained in a first recess extending along said first axis, said two members being independently slidable therein and positionable along the scanable surface to define two coordinates on said first axis, the distance between said coordinates comprising the dimension of the scan area at least immediately adjacent the scanable surface.

4. Apparatus as defined in claim 3 wherein said second set of slidable members comprise two members that are located and retained in a second recess extending along said second axis, said two members being independently

slidable therein and positionable along the scanable surface to define two coordinates on said second axis, the distance between said coordinates comprising the dimension of the scan area at least immediately adjacent the scanable surface.

5 5. Apparatus as defined in claim 4 wherein each slidable member of said first and second sets of members comprises a relatively flat bar that extends from its respective recess a substantial distance onto the scanable surface to enable a user to closely identify the location of the coordinate that is being defined.

10 6. Apparatus as defined in claim 4 wherein each slidable member of said first and second sets of members comprises a pointer that extends from its respective recess adjacent to the scanable surface to enable a user to closely identify the location of the coordinate that is being defined.

15 7. Apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said first set of slidable members comprise four members, two of which are located and retained in each of first and third recesses extending along said first axis on opposite sides of the scanable surface, said four members being independently slidable in said recesses and positionable along the scanable surface to define first and second coordinates on each side of said scanable surface on said first axis, the distance between said first and second coordinates on the same side comprising the dimension of the scan area at least immediately adjacent the scanable surface, straight lines extending between said first and second coordinates to the respective first and second coordinates on the opposite side of the scanable surface defining a scan area portion along said first axis.

25 8. Apparatus as defined in claim 7 wherein said second set of slidable members comprise four members, two of which are located and retained in each of second and fourth recesses extending along said second axis on opposite sides of the scanable surface, said four members being independently slidable in said recesses and positionable along the scanable surface to define first and second coordinates on each side of said scanable surface on said second axis, the distance between said first and second coordinates on the same side comprising the dimension

of the scan area at least immediately adjacent the scanable surface, straight lines extending between first and second coordinates on one side to the respective first and second coordinates on the opposite side of the scan surface defining a scan area portion along said second axis, the scan area being defined by the coextensive scan area portions along said first and second axes.

9. Apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said communication link comprises a conductor that can be connected to said control interface of the scanning device.

10. Apparatus as defined in claim 1 further comprising a switch for generating a scan signal and applying the same to said control interface.

11. Apparatus for scanning an item and producing a scanned digital image of at least a portion of the item, comprising:

a scanner having a scan surface of a first predetermined size and shape for holding and presenting an item to be scanned;

a positioning apparatus having a plurality of coordinate specifying members for defining coordinates which together can specify a valid bounded scan area on said surface, and generating signals that identify said coordinates;

a control interface for controlling the initiation and completion of a scan operation including the selective scanning of a portion of the scan surface responsive to said coordinate identifying signals being applied thereto, said control interface examining said coordinate identifying signals to determine that a valid bounded scan area is specified;

wherein said scanner selectively scans a portion of the scan surface that represents a valid bounded scan area that is specified by defined coordinates and produces a scanned digital image thereof responsive to a scan being initiated and completed by said control interface.

12. Apparatus as defined in claim 11 wherein said positioning apparatus comprises a user input device that is capable of defining a valid bounded scan area having various shapes and sizes.

13. Apparatus as defined in claim 11 wherein said positioning
5 apparatus comprises:

a first set of slidable members located on a first axis adjacent the scanable surface for defining coordinates of the scan area along said first axis thereof and generating signals indicative of said coordinates; and

10 a second set of slidable members located on a second axis generally perpendicular to said first axis, said second axis being adjacent the scanable surface, said second set of slidable members defining coordinates of the scan area along said second axis thereof and generating signals indicative of said coordinates.

14. A method for scanning a scan area within a scanable surface, comprising the steps of:

15 defining a scan area;

determining whether said scan area is contained entirely within the scanable surface;

scanning a scanable portion of said scan area if said scan area is not contained entirely within the scanable surface; and,

20 scanning the entire scan area if said scan area is contained entirely within the scanable surface.

15. The method as defined in claim 14 wherein said defining, determining and scanning steps comprise functionality that can be selectively enabled and disabled.

25 16. The method as defined in claim 15 wherein prior to said determining step further comprising the steps of:

determining whether said functionality is enabled;

scanning said scanable surface when said functionality is not enabled;
and,

determining whether said scan area is valid when said functionality is enabled.

5 17. A method for scanning a scan area within a scanable surface of a scanning device using a positioning apparatus having a plurality of members for defining coordinates of the scan area, said method comprising the steps of:

positioning selected ones of said plurality of members to define
coordinates of the scan area;; and,

10 scanning the scan area

18. The method as defined in claim 17 wherein said positioning,
determining and scanning steps comprise functionality that can be selectively enabled
and disabled.

15 19. The method as defined in claim 18 wherein prior to said determining step further comprising the steps of:

determining whether said functionality is enabled;

scanning said scanable surface when said functionality is not enabled;

and,

20 determining whether said scan area defined by said plurality of members
is valid when said functionality is enabled.

20. The method as defined in claim 19 wherein said step of
determining whether said scan area is valid further comprises the step of returning an
error message to the user when said scan area defined by said plurality of members is
not valid.

25 21. The method as defined in claim 19 wherein said scan area is valid
when it is a bounded area.

22. The method as defined in claim 17 further comprising the steps of:

constructing a digital file of said scan area; and,
sending said digital file a previously specified destination.

5 23. The method as defined in claim 17, further comprising
determining whether said scan area as specified by the defined
coordinates is contained entirely within the scanable surface;

scanning a scanable portion of said scan area if said scan area is not
contained entirely within the scanable surface; and,

10 scanning the entire scan area if said scan area is contained entirely
within the scanable surface.

24. A system for scanning a scan area within a scanable surface of a scanning device using a positioning apparatus having a plurality of members for defining said scan area on a scanable surface of a scanning device, said method comprising the steps of:

5 means for determining whether said scan area is contained entirely within the scanable surface;

means for scanning the scanable portion of said scan area if said scan area is not contained entirely within the scanable surface; and,

10 means for scanning said entire scanable surface if said scan area is contained entirely within the scan surface.